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BOYS' LIFE

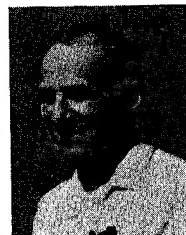
FOR
ALL
BOYS

June is out-of-doors time, so BL has put together a package of fresh-air features sure to satisfy every reader. Leading the way is Durward Allen's **Countdown for Lobo**, a naturalist's cry of alarm about a vanishing creature of nature . . . Another outdoor phenomenon Americans admire is the baseball star, and we get a close look at one through the eyes of another, Yankee catcher Elston Howard, who describes the fabulous **Mickey Mantle** . . . The fine old sport of golfing is invaded by a novice who tees off with **The Liechtenstein Swing**, Jack Ritchie's laugh-a-line fiction funfest . . . If you like air travel, take a cruise through the history of ballooning with John Bowers' **The Sky's the Limit** . . . The conclusion of Gene Caesar's **Mountain Giant** brings us back to earth, to follow the trail of a young hunter who finds his emotions more than a little mixed when the battle with the giant ends . . . Next, dive deep into tropical waters as Ozzie Sweet's camera and words bring to life the thrills of **Hunting the Giant Hawksbill** . . . By this time you're really ready for an outdoor trip, so expert woodsman George Laycock invites you to share in his **Northwoods Camping Adventure** . . . But before getting into the magazine, meet:



ELSTON HOWARD

A long-time teammate of Mickey Mantle, Ellie is the New York Yankees' star catcher and a natural choice to write about the great center fielder whose booming bat and unlimited courage have made him a shoo-in candidate for baseball's Hall of Fame. Off the field and on, Mickey is the man who inspires the Yankees—and Howard takes you behind the scenes to The Mickey Mantle I Know.



GEORGE LAYCOCK

"One Impulse from a vernal wood/May teach you more of man/of moral evil and of good/Than all the sages can," says this devoted outdoorsman, quoting William Wordsworth. And Mr. Laycock practices what he preaches, living in the wide open spaces practically the year around. Often he takes his family, and it's a great time for all, as you'll read in **Northwoods Camping Adventure**.

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DESIGNER: BOB CROZIER

HE had just about the best ears of anybody they ever sent over and also he had never seen a golf course before in his life. So naturally he was going to go out for the golf team.

I don't know how the whole thing started, but we've been trading with Liechtenstein for some time now. Their *Gymnasium*—which is what they call a high school over there—sends us one of its students for a year and we retaliate with one of ours.

This year we got Sigmund Eberwasser.

When he got off the bus he carried golf clubs besides his suitcases. I thought that was a little unusual because it was February, and there was a foot of snow on the ground.

Sigmund and I recognized each other because we had exchanged snapshots before he got here. According to Mr. Meadows, our principal, Sigmund had decided to stay at my house because we have a high-ceilinged basement.

"I brought Dad's car," I said. "It's parked down the block."

Sigmund looked in that direction. "Which one is it?"

"The light blue two-door with the cream color top."

He pursed his lips thoughtfully. "That is 116 meters, or about 127 yards from here."

I had the feeling that this was going to be a long year.

When we got to the car, Sigmund frowned. "Alas," he said, "according to my pacing, the actual measurement is 132 yards. Not 127."

I opened the car door.

"I am merely estimating distances whenever I get the chance," Sigmund said. "The correct appraisal of yardage in golf is of the utmost importance." He put his golf bag lovingly in the back of the car. "I have chosen golf as my game."

"I noticed that."

"It is my belief that for an individual to be properly rounded, he must cultivate the mind and the body."

I agreed. "I'm not too bad with the golf sticks myself. Got into the quarterfinals in the *Fox Valley Gazette* tournament last year."

"In Liechtenstein my game was soccer," Sigmund said. "However, six months ago when I was informed that I was to be an exchange student, I determined to master another sport." He beamed. "Now I am here to join your golf team."

I cleared my throat. "Sigmund, we don't have a golf team at Stevenson High."

His mouth dropped. "But I thought that golf was such an American game that every high school would have a team. Have I been practicing so assiduously for the last six months for nothing?"

"Don't take it too hard," I said. "Come spring, I'll take you out to the Briercliff Club and you can show me your stuff. I suppose you've never played on an American course?"

"I have never played on any golf course," Sigmund said. "As a matter of fact, I have never even seen a golf course. In newsreels, yes. But in the original, no."

I watched the passing scenery for a few seconds without speaking.

Sigmund explained. "You see Liechtenstein consists of but 62 square miles in which live almost 18 thousand people. Of this 62 square miles of land, the most consists of mountains, and what is not mountains is used for dairy herds and farming. And so you see there is no room for a golf course. The

THE LIECHTENSTEIN SWING

By JACK RITCHIE

land is too valuable."

"Then how can you learn golf without getting on a golf course?"

He smiled patiently. "How does an astronaut really learn to be a proficient astronaut? By flying in space?" He shook his head. "No. He is not even allowed into space until he has become proficient. He learns everything basic he must learn on the ground. By practice. And so how does one really learn golf? One learns golf on the practice range, on the driving range."

"Oh," I said, "they got a driving range in Liechtenstein?"

"Well . . . no. You see Liechtenstein consists of but 62 square miles in which live . . ."

"I get the picture," I said. "So where did you practice?"

"I practiced in my parents' backyard."

I was going to ask him about broken windows, but then I pulled up at home and Mom and Dad and my little brother Homer were there to welcome Sigmund.

Mom had sauerbraten for the occasion and after he ate, Sigmund looked out at our backyard which was covered with snow.

"Do you have garden space?" Sigmund asked.

"The half of the yard toward the garage is garden," Dad said.

Sigmund nodded. "Could I borrow a shovel, a pick and also two buckets?"

We stood at the window and watched Sigmund as he cleared away some snow and then used the pick on the frozen ground. He began putting chunks of frozen earth into the buckets.

"Why don't you ask him why he's doing that?" Mom said.

I shook my head. "I don't have the nerve." I looked at Homer. "Why don't you ask him?"

"No sirree," Homer said. "The smart thing to do is just let him do what he's going to do, and when you find out what it is you pretend that you knew what it was all along."

There was no doubt about it. My little brother was growing up.

When Sigmund had the buckets filled, he took them down into the basement. He came back up and took off his heavy jacket. "I think the earth should melt by tomorrow."

The next day at school, Sigmund made a little speech in assembly.

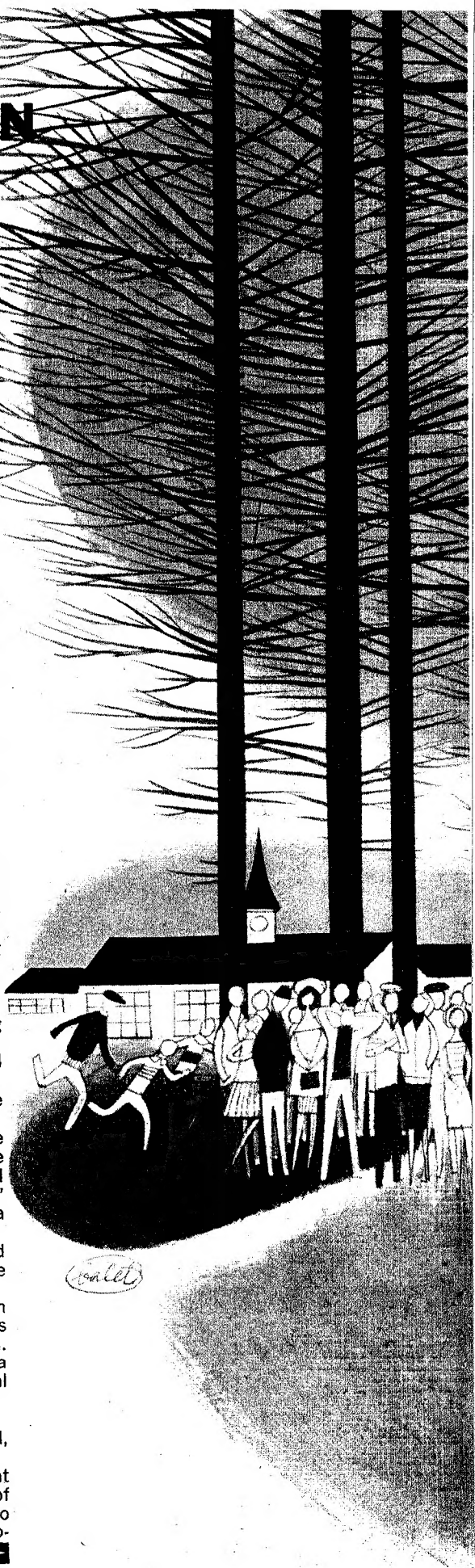
He said the usual words, and we applauded when we thought he was done. Only he wasn't.

He held up a hand. "Pupils of Stevenson High, it has come to my attention that this school is not in the possession of a golf team. There is a football team, a baseball team, a swimming team, a track team and several other teams. But no golf team."

Sigmund waved a finger. "For shame!"

I noticed that Mr. Meadows, our principal, looked a little startled.

"For shame," Sigmund said again, "that this could happen in America, the citadel of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Do you not realize that golf is the most democratic game in the world?" (To page 57) ➡



Stinson's uncle had learned to swim (well, almost) by reading a book. Couldn't his sharp, athletic nephew learn to play golf the same way?



THE LIECHTENSTEIN SWING

➡ (From page 24) I noticed that a lot of the kids were looking at me as though I were responsible for Sigmund. I just happened to have a basement with a high ceiling, that's all.

Sigmund continued. "The game is divided into at least three segments—the drive and long irons, the middle and short irons, and the putt. Height and weight might enable one man to excel off the tee, but this is no guarantee that he will experience a similar natural advantage with the irons or putting. And golf consists of the *whole* game. One does not win by the drive alone, nor by the iron, nor by the putt. And *anyone* with determination and hard work can learn to excel at the game regardless of race, creed, color or sex, and that is the American way."

Naturally we all applauded. What else can you do when you hear something patriotic?

Mr. Meadows got up. "Sigmund, I think you have a point. It seems like a good idea to me and I'll see that Stevenson High has a golf team by spring."

That afternoon, when Sigmund and I got home, he went downstairs to see if his dirt had melted. He came back up after a minute, borrowed an old blanket and a broom from Mom, and went back downstairs.

After a while I heard some pounding coming from the basement—the hammer and nail kind.

That stopped after 20 minutes and then I heard a *whack!*

Not too loud, but firm.

It came again.

Whack!

I counted 10 *whacks* and then couldn't stand it any longer.

I found that Sigmund had built a shallow box about five inches deep and a yard square and filled it with his melted dirt. And now he stood on another platform that was just about five inches high, too.

He had a net bag of those white, plastic imitation golf balls—the ones that are hollow and have holes in them. They imitate the action of a real golf ball pretty well, but they go only about one-tenth as far, which is fine for the backyard or the basement.

I could see now why he wanted a high ceiling. He needed the headroom for his backswing and follow-through. The blanket kept the plastic balls from ricocheting all over the basement.

"This is how I have achieved my superbness at golf," Sigmund said.

He teed up a ball in his dirt box and took a swing.

Whack!

He seemed to have a smooth swing and it sounded like a good *whack*, but he frowned. "That was but 170 yards and I believe it faded to the right."

I rubbed my neck. "Now look, Sigmund, are you telling me that if that had been a real golf ball and you'd hit it outdoors, you would know that it would go 170 yards and fade?"

He nodded. "Of course. When you attend a baseball game and you do not happen to be looking at the batter when he strikes at the ball, cannot you nevertheless tell by the crack of the bat whether the ball was hit for some distance, or just ticked, or fouled?"

"Well," I said. "I guess you could,

if you worked at it long enough."

"Exactly," Sigmund said. "And I discovered—after considerable practice in my parents' backyard in Liechtenstein—that I could estimate with increasing efficiency the distance I struck the plastic ball, simply by the sound. And since a real golf ball would go 10 times farther, I simply multiply by 10 to achieve the true distance. And further, by the sound alone, I could determine whether a slice or a hook had occurred."

Now he laid one of the balls on the

dirt and swung at it with his nine iron.

I could see now why he had brought the broom down. He was going to have to do a lot of sweeping up after his iron shots.

He wiped some of the dirt from his trousers. "I come from a very inventive family. At the age of 28, my Uncle Franz determined to learn how to swim after he found a booklet on the subject. All winter long Franz practiced his strokes while lying across the seats of two chairs. In spring, when the

water reached 62 degrees, he plunged into the Rhine, which is one of the borders of our country."

"And he knew how to swim?"

"Not exactly. As a matter of fact he would have drowned except that an English schoolteacher on vacation happened to notice the bubbles. She jumped in and rescued him."

I looked at the ceiling.

"It was not really Uncle Franz's fault," Sigmund said. "The booklet was in French and Uncle Franz is not too especially well (To page 60) ➡"

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Kay

THE LIECHTENSTEIN SWING

➡ (From page 57) acquainted with that language. Evidently something was lost in the translation."

"And I suppose you found a booklet on golf?"

He studied me. "You do not believe that I can learn to play golf from a

booklet? I maintain that the first time I step onto a golf course I will shoot an 80 or less."

"Ha," I said. "Look, hotshot, if you got all that confidence why don't you enter the *Fox Valley Gazette* Junior Golf Tournament this spring? It's the first golf event of the year and maybe you can bring home the bacon."

Sigmund nodded. "I accept."

But spring was still a way to go and so Sigmund kept up his practicing in the basement.

One evening at the beginning of

April, I was trying to do my solid geometry and listen to those whacks.

Whack!

Nice and solid. Probably about 220 yards right down the middle.

Whack!

A real good one, too. Even farther. Whack!

No. He topped that one. He'd be lucky if it rolled 100 yards.

Wow! My ears must be getting almost as good as Sigmund's.

This thing was getting me. I took my books upstairs to my bedroom.

Just as I closed the door to the hall, I heard another faint whack. That one would have hooked into the rough.

Later that evening I watched television in the livingroom while Sigmund read the newspaper.

"Ah, ha," he said, "He has done it."

My father looked his way. "Who did what?"

"My Uncle Franz has become the first Liechtensteiner to swim the English Channel."

"He is married to an English woman," Sigmund said. "They met under rather unique circumstances. It actually began with this booklet which..."

That Saturday Sigmund and I registered for the *Gazette's* annual Junior Golf Tournament.

The way the deal worked was that everybody who signed up had to play a qualifying round and then the eight lowest scorers would get into the match tournament itself.

I thought that on qualifying day I'd finally get to see what Sigmund could do on a golf course, but the weather turned so bad that only eight kids showed up and the officials decided that all of them would automatically be in the tournament without having to get all wet or struck by lightning.

The next morning the weather was better and Sigmund and I got up early and drove Dad's car to the Briercrest Country Club.

I was one of the first two starters—playing against Tom Jackson, who's a senior at Stevenson High—and we teed off at exactly eight.

This was match play, not medal, and you didn't count the total strokes for the round, but played instead for each hole—win, lose or halve.

At the end of the ninth hole, Jackson was one up on me, but on the back nine, I pulled even and then one ahead on the long 14th. I held that lead through the 18th hole and won the match, one up.

I went on to the clubhouse to wait for Sigmund to finish his match with somebody named Bob Harrington.

I was a little surprised to find Sigmund already there. But Briercrest had two front nines and nobody'd played through Jackson and me, so I figured that Sigmund and Harrington had probably played the other nine and got to the back nine before we did.

Sigmund didn't seem happy or sad. Or tired either, for that matter.

I grinned. "Well, Sigmund, I suppose you won your match?"

He nodded. "Of course."

That teetered me a little. "Don't tell me you even broke 80?"

"By at least 79 strokes."

There had to be an explanation.

"It seems that my opponent, Mr. Harrington, was unable to play," Sigmund said. "Yesterday he attempted to ride his younger brother's skateboard with but indifferent success and received a dislocated shoulder. And so, according to the rules of the *Gazette* Tournament, I am declared winner of my match by forfeit."

And that was how Sigmund got into the quarterfinals without lifting a golf club or setting foot on a course.

The next day I was paired off against Dick Warnecki, who also goes to Stevenson High. His putter got cold and I won, three and two. Sigmund was in the clubhouse when I got there.

"My opponent did not feel well last

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night and so he went to a doctor," Sigmund said. "The diagnosis was mumps and I am again declared the winner by forfeit."

It couldn't have happened but there it was—the finals between Sigmund and me, and he hadn't even broken open that new pack of golf balls.

It rained hard that night and didn't stop until six in the morning. When Sigmund and I got to Briercrest, things were pretty wet and foggy, but there was a fair-sized crowd waiting.

Sigmund took the cellophane off the three-pack of new golf balls and teed up first. He hit the ball well and it traveled about 180 yards.

Sigmund wasn't happy about that. "According to my ears, that ball should have gone considerably farther."

"According to my eyes," I said, "The fairway is loaded with water and a thing like that cuts down the bounce."

I poked my drive 10 yards past his. Sigmund's ball had come to rest on the slope of a small hill. He took his stance and swung. The ball skittered forward maybe 15 yards.

He scratched his head. "I do not understand why that happened."

"You were playing a side-hill lie," I said. "But I guess your booklet didn't mention anything about how to handle a situation like that."

When Sigmund holed out, he had a nine. I sank my putt for a par four.

On his drive off the second tee, his ball ended up in the trees to the left. He frowned. "I distinctly did not hear a hook when my club met the ball."

"A stiff breeze just came up from the east," I said. "In a case like that when you loft the ball, the wind catches it. Keep it low."

The second hole was a long par five and I went one over. Sigmund carded a 13. The par-three third hole was 140 yards over a pond.

My shot was a beauty that stopped within a foot of the cup.

Sigmund teed up his ball and plopped it into the drink.

He teed up another ball. His back swing was too short again and he contributed another ball to the pond.

He breathed a little hard. "This I find impossible to understand. I should have reached the green easily."

"Playing over water, you're up against a mental hazard," I said. "You were probably thinking that each one of your new golf balls costs 75 cents and so be careful not to lose it. A thing like that can tighten you up. But I guess the booklet didn't mention that."

He glared at me. "I wish to clarify a point. I do not have a booklet. I merely read an article in an encyclopedia and it was general." He looked toward the pond. "Very general."

I guess maybe I'd been leaning on him a little too hard, so I shut up.

After I won the fifth straight hole, the crowd began drifting back to the clubhouse and hot coffee.

I took nine straight holes and when we went to the 10th tee there weren't more than a dozen people still with us, including the officials and the photographer from the *Gazette*.

I wrapped up the tournament by taking the 10th hole too and Sigmund congratulated me. "Obviously there is more to this game than I thought," he said ruefully. "For my own enlightenment, let us finish the 18 holes."

As we went along, I filled him in on some points. Sigmund came home

with a card of 146. But that wasn't really as bad as it looked. On the last three holes he seemed to get the knack of playing outdoors.

Sigmund kept practicing in the basement, but now he also went out on the driving range and the course whenever he got the chance.

Within three weeks he was shooting regularly in the middle 80s and when our new golf team was organized Sigmund was our number three man.

Mr. Meadows and the principals of other high schools in the Fox Valley

had organized a six-team league and when all the shooting was done, Stevenson High had another gold cup for the trophy case in the gymnasium.

Toward the end of the semester, I was in the kitchen having a sandwich when I heard a *whack* from the basement. I'd never heard a *whack* like that before.

I took my sandwich downstairs.

My brother Homer had a baseball bat in his hands. He tossed a plastic golf ball into the air and took a swipe at it.

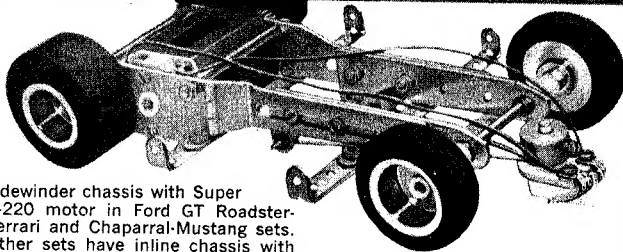
Whack!



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